

I am writing to oppose the lifting of regulations that prohibit the same company from "cross-ownership" (owning both a newspaper and a television station in the same geographic area). There is no freedom more important in a democracy than freedom of the press, but freedom of the press is threatened not only by government censorship, but also by censorship within the media world. Allowing a single individual or corporation to own both the newspaper and the television in a single geographic area is a recipe for disaster. It's like what happens in towns where Walmart Pharmacy has driven out and bought up all the competitors: if Walmart decides not to carry a particular drug (which happened with RU-486), then the residents of that area cannot get that drug--end of story. Similarly, if the corporation that owns both the newspaper and tv station decides not to cover a particular story, because it reflects poorly on one of the corporation's subsidiary companies, perhaps (a so!

rt of censorship that has been well-documented, for instance by Project Censorship), then that's it for the residents of that geographic area--end of story.

The needs and desires of corporations to make profits and conduct business must be weighed against the needs of desires of citizens to have access to a free and diversified press. Allowing cross-ownership of newspapers and tv stations will drastically skew that balance.

Sincerely,

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